



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 112 – June 12, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

I want to congratulate the Tempe Convention and Visitors Bureau for hosting an amazing annual meeting last week at the Stadium Club at Arizona State University. With sports marketing having such an impact on our state this year, it was fun to enjoy the view of Sun Devil Stadium and hear about the significant accomplishments that Tempe has achieved. The Tempe CVB has seen remarkable successes over the past year, and Stephanie Nowak and her team have done a great job of marketing Tempe to key target markets like Mexico, AAA offices and the GLBT community. They are also fortunate to have the support of a dedicated board of directors that provides expert guidance and comes from a wide variety of backgrounds. Tempe has had an incredible year, with increases in average daily room rates, RevPar and occupancy. Although I am disappointed that the AOT table didn't win the lunch competition – tickets to the Tempe Insight Bowl – it was fun to see top industry members working to create a parade float to honor the bowl game's move to Tempe. It is always an honor to attend these meetings to hear about how our industry continues to thrive and bring more visitors to our amazing state.

Have a good week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Get on the Mailing List!

AOT's newest quarterly newsletter, *Crossroads*, was mailed out to industry members across the state last month. *Crossroads* includes information about AOT's newest programs and services, industry news, the latest tourism research numbers, a list of upcoming meetings and events and interviews with staff from AOT and industry professionals. If you didn't receive your copy and would like to be included, please send your name and address to Loretta Belonio at lbelonio@azot.gov or (602) 364-3725.

Register Today for the 26th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

The 26th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held this July 10-12 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. The conference will offer chances to interact with members of the tourism industry from throughout Arizona and hear about past success and plans for the future. AOT's international representatives from Germany, the UK, Mexico, Japan and Canada will hold sessions, and Margie Emmermann will open the conference on Tuesday with AOT's "State of the Industry" presentation. Register online today at www.aztourismconference.com or call (602) 265-2252 for more information.

Rural Tourism Development Grant Program Fiscal Year 2007 – Coming Soon!

The release of the Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) guidelines for fiscal year 2007 is coming soon! The primary objective of the competitive grant program is to provide coordinated funding for tourism related infrastructure projects. These funds assist rural economic development through tourism to strengthen the regional and local economies and expand tourism in rural and Tribal communities throughout Arizona. The primary function of the infrastructure project must be tourism development and the project must be designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development. For more information, please contact Karen Bult at kbult@azot.gov.

Industry News

US Visit Launches "Know Before You Go" Campaign

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection on Wednesday launched a new traveler awareness campaign to kick off the summer travel season. The goal is to ease the burden of the 86 million travelers who visit or return from travel abroad each year via international airports throughout the nation. CBP Deputy Commissioner Deborah J. Spero launched the campaign at Baltimore/Washington International Airport. She was joined by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Catherine Barry and

Jim Williams, director of the US-VISIT program. "We want Americans to enjoy their international travel and to return safely to the U.S.," said Barry. "Our motto is 'Know before you go,' because a well-informed traveler has a safer and more enjoyable trip." The officials explained an inkless fingerprint system that identifies visitors to this country. (Special to Travel Advance)

Cabela's Sets Opening Date for Glendale Store

Cabela's, the hunting, fishing and outdoor gear retailer that has been one of the centerpieces of the development surrounding the Glendale Arena and Arizona Cardinals Stadium, will open its new Glendale store July 28. Currently in the process of hiring a staff of 300 for the store, Cabela's Monday said the facility will be open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. According to Cabela's officials, the 160,000-square-foot store will include more than 400 animals in museum-quality dioramas, a 40,000-gallon walk-through aquarium, a two-story "Conservation Mountain" with running waterfalls and streams, and an 8,000-square foot wildlife museum. Cabela's said that a customer's average stay at one of their stores is three and a half hours, with more than half coming from outside of a 100-mile radius. The Glendale store is the company's first foray into the Southwest. For more: www.cabelas.com. (Phoenix Business Journal, www.bizjournals.com/phoenix)

Travel Web Sites Enjoy Above-Average Visitation Growth

According to comScore Media Metrix's monthly analysis, with three of the top ten gaining web site categories falling under the travel umbrella, it is clear that March continued to be a time for making last minute travel, holiday, spring break, and/or summer plans. Car rental properties saw the greatest growth this month – up 22 percent over last month with more than 6.8 million visitors. Not far behind, the Ground Transportation/Cruise Category grew 17 percent over February with 9.8 million visitors, while visitation to Hotel and Resort sites increased 13 percent during the same period, with 32.9 million visitors. Of those, Hotels.com led the category in traffic (up 9 percent to 5.6 million visitors), followed by Marriott (up 11 percent to 4.7 million visitors). Americans performed 6.4 billion online searches in March, up 10 percent from the previous month and 15 percent from March 2005. For the eighth consecutive month, Google gained in search market share compared with a year ago and maintained its status as the market leader, with 42.7 percent of searches conducted on its sites, followed by Yahoo (28 percent), and Microsoft Corp.'s MSN (13 percent). (Computer World, TravelCom Report, 6/6)

Targeting Baby Boomers

The baby boomers, those between 1946 and 1964 and comprising a market of 76 million, are, once again, rewriting the rules. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, while only 34 percent of Americans age 65 and older go online, this number rises to 54 percent among 60-69 year-olds, and 72 percent among those 51-59 years of age. But, there is a marked, and potentially dangerous, difference in the way younger and

older users go about their business online. Pew found that Internet users in their twenties are more likely than those in their fifties and sixties to have used the Internet extensively, trying new things and possibly learning hard lessons about the dangers that lurk on the network. Internet users aged between 18 and 28 years ("Generation Y") are also more likely than those in their fifties to make changes in their online behavior to avoid getting unwanted software programs on their computer. (Source: eMarketer, TravelCom Reports, 6/6)

Hotel Kiosks Generating Airline Boarding Passes

Hilton Hotels recently announced that 37 of its properties are equipped with lobby kiosks that can allow guests to check in for flights, change or upgrade seats, and print boarding passes for 18 airlines. Last year, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) outfitted kiosks at the Holiday Inn Gwinnett Center in Duluth, Georgia with the ability to print out airline boarding passes, which it has been testing as part of its "next-generation property design" (BTN, April 18, 2005). IHG expects to supply the entire Holiday Inn system with the new technology by year-end. Marriott International currently has similar functionality at its Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center property and expects to expand it to three more hotels in the upcoming weeks. Starwood Hotels & Resorts said that it currently does not have enough airline partners to offer such a tool. (Source: www.BTNOnline.com)

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